

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the first full paragraph of specification page 25 with the following replacement paragraph:

A¹ — In particular, the standby STP engine 326 queries each line card 306, 308 to retrieve the last sequence number stored at each the line card 306, 308, as indicated at step 1008. The standby STP engine 326 then compares the retrieved sequence numbers to the last sequence number stored by standby STP engine 326. More specifically, the standby STP engine 326 determines whether any of the sequence numbers from the line cards 306, 308 is greater than its sequence number, as indicated at decision block 1010. Suppose, for example, that the last sequence number provided to the standby STP engine 326 before the active supervisor 304 crashed was sequence number “21”. If the sequence number stored at each of the line cards 306, 308 is less than or equal to this sequence number (i.e., “21”), then the standby STP engine 326 “knows” that the spanning tree port state information stored at the line cards 306, 308 is consistent with the spanning tree port state information stored in the port data structures 600 at the standby’s run-time memory 342. If, however, a line card, such as line card 308, returns a sequence number (e.g., “22”) that is greater than the sequence number at the standby STP engine 326, then the STP engine 326 concludes that at least one port state change message sent to this line card was not received by the standby STP engine 326. Since the standby STP engine 326 cannot “recover” this port state change, it preferably responds by directing the respective line card (i.e., line card 308) to transition all of its ports P to the blocking spanning tree port state, as indicated by Yes arrow 1012 leading to block 1014. —